

LABOURS

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PROGRAMME



THE National Executive Committee of the Labour Party undertook at the Annual Conference at Edinburgh last October to prepare and publish a programme of measures of Socialism and Social Amelioration, which a Labour Government would carry out during a full term of office when returned to power by the electors. In pursuance of this undertaking, the National Executive Committee now issues the following Declaration.

March, 1937.

LABOUR'S

IMMEDIATE PROGRAMME

**The Labour Party's plans to bring
real prosperity and peace to all**

● **Four Vital Measures of Reconstruction**

**FINANCE
THE LAND
TRANSPORT
COAL & POWER**

● **Four Great Benefits . . .**

**FOOD
WAGES
LEISURE
SECURITY**

● **Revival of THE DISTRESSED AREAS**

● **Positive Policy for PEACE**

LABOUR'S AIMS

Socialism

THE Labour Party's goal is the Socialist Commonwealth. It is determined to use the resources of our country so as to create a real prosperity in which *all* shall share. Science has placed in our hands the means of attaining this end, but only if finance and trade, industry and agriculture, conform to a national plan under the guidance of the State.

Peace

A just and lasting Peace is an essential condition of human progress. The Labour Party, therefore, will do everything possible to safeguard Peace and to co-operate with other nations so that they too may prosper.

Democracy

THE Labour Party stands firmly for Democracy. It is irreconcilably opposed to Dictatorship by any individual or group. It will strenuously resist all attacks on British liberties either from inside or from outside this country. A Labour Government will prove that, while preserving freedom and respecting the rights of minorities the democratic system can work swiftly and effectively. Labour will not allow its measures to be defeated by obstruction from vested interests or unrepresentative bodies. It will carry out its plans without inflicting injustice on individuals. A fair price will be paid for all private property transferred to public ownership.

The Labour Party, therefore, when the electors give it power, will without hesitation or delay take the first steps to reorganise the economic life of our country.

As a means to this end, the community must command the main levers which control the economic machine. These are **Finance, Land, Transport, Coal and Power.**

FOUR VITAL MEASURES OF RECONSTRUCTION

1. Finance

NO nation can plan its economic life unless it can control both its finance and its financiers. The Bank of England, like the Central Bank in most other countries, will become a Public Institution. It will be administered by practical and experienced men under the general direction of the Government. Through the Bank of England credit will be controlled in the interests of trade and employment.

New investment will also be controlled through a National Investment Board, whose duty will be to mobilise our financial resources, to guide them into the right channels, and to advise the Government on a financial plan for the full employment of our people. Large schemes of Public Development, including Housing, Electrification, Transport, and the extraction of Oil from Coal, will be carried out.

There will be no return to the Gold Standard. Every effort will be made to ensure the greatest possible stability of Trade and Employment.

The Companies Act will be amended so as to prevent the exploitation of the public and the ruin of industry by unscrupulous financiers.

Taxation will be used to secure a better distribution of wealth and purchasing power, and to provide funds for the extension of the Social Services. The penal taxation of Co-operative Societies will be repealed.

Labour will encourage scientific research. It will not allow new inventions to be frustrated by private interests. Where scientific discovery creates the possibility of a new industry, Labour will, if the national interest demands it, finance and develop such an industry as a public enterprise.

2. The Land

THE land should belong to the people, and national planning requires that the use of land shall be controlled in the public interest. Without such control it is impossible to use the limited area of this country to the best advantage, whether for agriculture, industry, or other purposes. Houses, schools, and other necessary buildings, playing fields, open spaces, and national parks must be provided. The beauty of our countryside must be preserved. A short Bill will be passed enabling the Government and other Public Authorities to acquire such land as they need for any purpose without delay and at a reasonable price.

The small householder and owner occupier, however, will be left in undisputed possession of his home. Protection of the Tenant through the Rent Restriction Act will be continued and extended, and the tied cottage system will be abolished.

3. Transport

COMPETITION in Transport, especially between private undertakings is wasteful, inefficient and dangerous. A National Transport Board will therefore be set up to co-ordinate Transport by Road, Rail, Air, and Coastwise Shipping, and to own and operate the Railways and such other Transport Services as are suitable for transfer to Public Ownership. It will be

the duty of this Board to give the nation a safe, cheap, and efficient Transport System with good conditions of labour for its employees.

4. Coal and Power

THE Coal Industry is in the hands of a swarm of private owners. Many Commissions of Inquiry have shown that its management is hopelessly inefficient. The miner risks his life for a sweated wage. The retail price of coal is grossly swollen by middlemen's profits. The extraction of oil and other valuable by-products from coal has been neglected. The Coal Industry, including Coal Treatment and Marketing, will therefore be unified under Public Ownership. The first charge on the industry will be a living wage and safety for the miner.

The Electricity and Gas Supply Industries, already partly owned by public bodies and subject to regulation, will likewise be brought completely under Public Ownership. The national supply of Heat, Light, and Power, both for domestic and industrial purposes, will be co-ordinated, so as to make cheap and efficient supplies available to all.

FOUR GREAT BENEFITS

LABOUR'S policy will bring four great benefits to the people—abundant food, good wages, leisure and security.

1. Food

IT is a scandal that so many people, including young children, should be suffering to-day from malnutrition. This is largely due to gross inequality of wealth, but also to chaos and profiteering by middlemen in the nation's food supplies. A Labour Government will organise home production and will control imports so

as to ensure to the home producer a fair price for his produce and to make available to all a plentiful supply of good food. In particular, sufficient and suitable food will be assured through the social services, for children and for expectant and nursing mothers. A living wage for the worker on the land will be the first charge on British Agriculture. By a full use of Co-operative undertakings and Marketing Boards the present wide gap between what the producer receives and what the consumer pays will be narrowed.

2. Wages

A LABOUR GOVERNMENT will co-operate with the Trade Unions to improve wage standards and will make any assistance to private enterprise conditional on the observance of Trade Union wages and conditions. It will seek to promote through the International Labour Office the adoption of Conventions to improve labour standards throughout the world.

3. Leisure

A UNIVERSAL legal obligation to pay for the present statutory public holidays will be imposed, and in addition, a universal statutory period of holiday each year will be enacted.

Legislation will be introduced for shorter working hours, taking as a standard a 40-Hour Working Week, with such adaptations as may be necessary. Details of the application of this legislation to different occupations will be settled in consultation with the representatives of those concerned.

A Labour Government will join with other countries which have already taken the lead in this matter at the International Labour Office, with a view to establishing an International Convention regulating hours within the above standard.

4. Security

LABOUR will launch a determined attack on insecurity due to fear of unemployment and loss of livelihood.

Vigorous measures will be adopted to increase employment, and to concentrate the available work on those best fitted to perform it. All children will be kept at school till 15, and as soon as the necessary arrangements can be made, till 16, with maintenance allowances. Provision will be made for improved pensions on condition that pensioners retire from industry. Pensions will also be granted on grounds of invalidity. Other injustices relating to pensions will be removed. A new Workmen's Compensation Bill will be passed. Health Services will be extended and special measures will be taken to reduce maternal mortality. For those who will remain unemployed, proper maintenance will be provided and the Means Test will be abolished.

THE DISTRESSED AREAS

IMMEDIATE remedies must be found for the terrible conditions prevailing in the Distressed Areas. The State must accept responsibility for the location of industry. Labour will take steps to bring new industries into these areas, will encourage existing industries, develop local resources and improve communications, assist Local Authorities and relieve the crushing burden of local rates. Drastic and immediate action will be taken to raise the shockingly low standards of life, which, for large numbers of people in these areas, amount to slow starvation.

Labour will not accept the present arbitrary boundaries of the Special Areas as defined by law. In particular, it will come to the aid of Lancashire.

FOREIGN POLICY AND DEFENCE

A LABOUR Government will make every endeavour to remove the economic causes of international rivalry, and to enable all peaceful nations to share, on fair terms, in the abundant wealth of the world. It will take the lead in seeking to strengthen and reinvigorate the League of Nations as an instrument of international co-operation and Collective Security. It will play its full part in every effort to check the present ruinous Arms Race, and to promote Disarmament by international agreement, and, in particular, to substitute an International Air Police Force for National Air Forces and to establish an International Service of Civil Aviation.

A Labour Government will unhesitatingly maintain such armed forces as are necessary to defend our country and to fulfil our obligations as a member of the British Commonwealth and of the League of Nations. A Ministry of Defence will be set up to co-ordinate the three Defence Services and to increase their efficiency. Throughout these services, promotion to commissioned rank will be open to all, and will depend on merit alone, and no longer on wealth or class privilege. Conditions of service will be improved and, so far as possible, employment on the termination of service will be guaranteed to all. A Bill will be passed enabling the Government to take over any undertakings manufacturing munitions of war.

**THESE ARE LABOUR'S PLANS FOR
PROSPERITY AND PEACE. THESE
THINGS LABOUR WITH POWER
WILL ACCOMPLISH.**